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**Status of Displaced Teachers from Hurricane Katrina**

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**The Background:**

Following the lead of the Governor, the Tennessee Department of Education made available to displaced teachers from Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama a one-year, temporary *Emergency Teaching Credential*.

- The Department has verified that these individuals hold a valid license in Alabama, Louisiana or Mississippi. We were also able to verify the number of years of experience for Louisiana teachers.
- Applicants were given endorsements in the area(s) that most closely fit their endorsement area held on their existing Louisiana, Mississippi or Alabama license.
- The vast majority of teachers claim that they are interested in permanently staying in Tennessee. In order to continue teaching in Tennessee past this first year, they will be required to go through the Department's regular out-of-state licensure procedures.
- As of September 30<sup>th</sup>, the Department has processed forty-one certificates: thirty-six from Louisiana and five from Mississippi.
- We have received information that districts are pleased with their new employees, however, it should be noted that both Hamilton and Rutherford had hired a teacher who was then called back to New Orleans. Metro-Nashville has hired on three displaced individuals, Tipton, Rutherford, and Williamson have hired on two displaced individuals, and Hamilton and Hamblen have each hired one.

**The Recommendation:**

For information purposes only; no action required.

**Report to the State Board of Education on Teachers and  
Administrators Displaced by Hurricane Katrina  
October 21, 2005**

Along with the rest of Americans, Tennesseans were shocked at the fury and destruction unleashed upon the Gulf Coast by Hurricane Katrina. Both the destruction of towns along the ocean front and the widespread flooding in New Orleans caused a large-scale evacuation never before seen in U.S. history. As the scope of the crisis became known, Tennesseans began assisting displaced persons to the fullest extent possible. The state government, led by the Governor, responded with food, medical supplies, housing support, and career assistance. Following the lead of the Governor, who with Executive Order Number 27 suspended licensure requirements to displaced pharmacists, doctors, and nurses, the Department of Education created a one-year *Emergency Teaching Credential* for teachers displaced by Hurricane Katrina.

We have utilized existing communication pathways with the licensure offices in Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana in order to verify that applicants hold a valid teaching license in their respective states. We also confirm that applicants have not had their teaching licenses revoked in any U.S. state. With these two items confirmed, the Tennessee Department of Education has been issuing one-year certificates with endorsements in the area(s) that most closely match the endorsements held in the previous state. Before being hired, teachers must pass a Tennessee Board of Investigation background check, although the \$29 fee has been waived for displaced applicants.

As of September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2005, forty-one *Emergency Teaching Credentials* have been issued, with thirty-six issued to displaced Louisiana teachers, and the remaining five issued to displaced Mississippi teachers. In the past few days, the daily rate of applications has been slowing, and we do not expect to issue more than sixty credentials in total. The vast majority of these teachers have indicated a desire to permanently relocate to Tennessee.

The Department has not closely tracked teacher hiring patterns, but we do know that three displaced teachers have been hired by Metro-Nashville, one by Hamilton County, two by Rutherford County, three by Williamson County, two by Tipton County, and one by Hamblen County. We are sending permanent licensure application instructions to displaced teachers who have indicated that they desire to stay in Tennessee.

## Instructions for Displaced Teachers to Apply for Emergency Certification in Tennessee

Displaced teachers are encouraged to apply to teach in Tennessee. The Tennessee Department of Education has made available a one-year *Emergency Teaching Credential* for certified educators from Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama.

The process of receiving this credential is outlined below:

Step 1) Fill out the *Application for Emergency Teaching Credential*

Step 2) Submit a completed *Application for Emergency Teaching Credential* to the Tennessee Department of Education, by:

- Fax to 615-532-4791, "Attention: Matthew Pepper"
- Mail to: Matthew Pepper  
Andrew Johnson Tower, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
710 James Robertson Parkway  
Nashville, Tennessee 37243
- E-mail as an attached, scanned page to [matthew.pepper@state.tn.us](mailto:matthew.pepper@state.tn.us)

Step 3) The Tennessee Department of Education will verify your valid teaching credential through the Department of Education of your respective state.

Step 4) Upon verification, you will be granted a one-year Emergency Teaching Credential, which authorizes employment in Tennessee public schools. You will immediately have the opportunity to demonstrate this certification to Tennessee school districts through our website, <https://www.k-12.state.tn.us/tcertinf/Search.asp>, and receive a paper copy of this certification in the mail within a few days.

Step 5) Contact school districts' human resources departments to inquire about employment opportunities. School districts will inform you of their application process, which must include a criminal background check.

For more information or additional questions, displaced teachers should contact:

Matthew Pepper  
Andrew Johnson Tower, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
710 James Robertson Parkway  
Nashville, Tennessee 37243  
Telephone Number: 615-741-5178  
Fax Number: 615-532-4791  
[matthew.pepper@state.tn.us](mailto:matthew.pepper@state.tn.us)

# APPLICATION FOR EMERGENCY TEACHING CREDENTIAL

For Educators displaced by Hurricane Katrina

## PERSONAL DATA

If you have previously held a Tennessee Teacher's License or Permit indicate below:

Type \_\_\_\_\_

Reference/Teacher Number \_\_\_\_\_

Last Name		First Name		Middle/Maiden	
Social Security Number	Email Address	Telephone Number	Date of Birth	* Race	* Sex
Street/P.O. Box		City	State	Zip Code	

*\*Optional-Statistical information only*

## PLEASE READ CAREFULLY BEFORE SIGNING

Answer the following questions if you have **NEVER** held a Tennessee Teacher License or Permit:

1. Have you ever been convicted of a felony (including a conviction or plea of nolo contendere)? \_\_\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO
2. Have you ever been convicted of the illegal possession of drugs and/or narcotics? \_\_\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO
3. Have you ever falsified or altered documentation required for licensure? \_\_\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Answer the following questions if you have **EVER** held a Tennessee Teacher License or Permit, (since the Tennessee License or Permit was last issued or renewed):

1. Have you been convicted of a felony, (including a conviction or plea of nolo contendere)? \_\_\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO
2. Have you been convicted of the illegal possession of drugs and/or narcotics? \_\_\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO
3. Have you falsified or altered documentation required for licensure? \_\_\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPLICANTS HOLDING A TEACHER LICENSE IN EITHER ALABAMA, LOUISIANA OR MISSISSIPPI

I currently hold a valid teaching license in one or more of the following states:

\_\_\_\_\_ Alabama

\_\_\_\_\_ Louisiana

\_\_\_\_\_ Mississippi

From which district and school have you been displaced?

District: \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_

What grade(s)/subject area(s) did you teach at this school? \_\_\_\_\_

Please be advised that the State of Tennessee will contact the Department of Education for each or any of the states indicated to verify your license on your behalf. However, if you have a copy of the license you may also attach it to this application.

This is a non-renewable credential. If you are planning to continue to reside in Tennessee after the 2005-2006 school year additional requirements must be met to be issued a full teaching license in Tennessee. Please indicate below if you plan to remain in Tennessee after the 2005-2006 school year.

\_\_\_\_\_ Currently I do not plan to reside in Tennessee after the 2005-2006 school year.

\_\_\_\_\_ I do plan to reside in Tennessee after the 2005-2006 school year. Please send me the additional information required to obtain a full Tennessee teaching license.

## Commissioner of Education

Final Action: \_\_\_\_\_ Approved \_\_\_\_\_ Not Approved \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Commissioner, State Department of Education

Mail or Fax to:

Matthew Pepper, Andrew Johnson Tower 6th Floor  
710 James Robertson Parkway  
Nashville, Tennessee 37243-0377  
Telephone (615) 741-5178  
Fax: (615) 532-4791  
E-mail: matthew.pepper@state.tn.us